1 Community Overview

This Comprehensive Plan is designed as a framework for guiding future development, redevelopment, and community enhancement in the City and its planning area over the next 20 years and beyond. The purpose of this plan is to establish a vision, along with realistic goals and achievable strategies, that residents, business and land owners, major institutions, civic groups, members of advisory committees, and public officials prefer – and will support with action – in the years ahead.

1.1 Introduction

Carbondale is a freestanding community that has evolved from its earliest years as a railroad center to being a regional hub of economic activity. The evidence of this history is still represented in every corner of the City – through the Town Square, near downtown neighborhoods, parks and civic spaces. The current economic engines of education and health care (represented by Southern Illinois University (SIU) and Memorial Hospital), in addition to retail, offer the ongoing catalysts for growth. While change in the community is inevitable, there are implied decisions that will be necessary in the future:

- How do we want our community to appear?
- What type of growth do we want and where should it occur?
- How do we achieve our economic objectives?
- What improvements and enhancements will be needed?
- What are our priorities for achieving our goals ?

This planning process offers an opportunity for the community to remember its past, but, more importantly, to envision its future. While future actions are likely to build upon past endeavors, the success of the City in achieving its vision will largely depend on the manner in which residents address current challenges and opportunities.

From its initial founding around the Town Square, Daniel H. Brush started a 56-acre community that has grown steadily into the Carbondale of today. The railroad added to the original influx of people, but the presence of Southern Illinois University allowed Carbondale's population to expand during the second half of the 20th century. Since the University's expansion, Carbondale has continued to grow by adapting to new forms of economic advancement, acting as a hub for the Southern Illinois region. The role as the central city in the region is evident as surrounding communities utilize Carbondale's assets related to health care, retail,

higher education, and social services. Today, Carbondale seeks additional and innovative economic opportunities to be able to keep growing both physically and economically. Respecting the natural environment and creating job growth, among other goals, carry implications that residents acknowledge must be addressed in order to remain successful in the future.

Carbondale in Context –Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

The following community snapshot offers a summary of Carbondale socioeconomic data, compared to other Illinois college towns. The data was put together by the City to highlight existing socioeconomic conditions and demographic characteristics pertaining to population, educational attainment, and the economic and housing opportunities that affect residents and local businesses. Although the summary is only a snapshot in time, it provides insight as to the current issues and

CARBONDALE PLANNING TIMELINE

This is not the first time Carbondale has undertaken a comprehensive plan. Most recently, the 1997 Comprehensive Plan served as a guide for the City over the past 13 years. The goals and objectives set forth in the last plan set several other planning efforts in motion. These subsequent efforts will be incorporated into this planning process, as will the goals of past documents, such as:

1979	Carbondale Comprehensive Plan
1988	Carbondale Transportation Study
1990	Carbondale Downtown Development Plan
1991	Architectural/Historical Survey of the Central Area of Carbondale
1993	Carbondale 2000 – Visions for City Development in the 21st Century
1995	Carbondale Downtown Action Plan
1996	Architectural Preservation Guidelines
1997	**Carbondale Comprehensive Plan**
1997	The Historic Town Square (Architectural Survey Report)
2002	Carbondale Historic Preservation Plan
2002	150 Years of History – A Pictorial Celebration of Carbondale's Sesquicentennial
2007	Assessment of Response Times & Station Distribution (Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Consulting Service Report)
2008	Revisions to the Carbondale Revised Code
2009	City of Carbondale –Municipal Budget for FY2010 (Annual)
2009	City of Carbondale Five-Year Community Investment Program

Through this process, the Comprehensive Plan will serve as an up-to-date guide for the development of Carbondale with respect to land use, thoroughfares and streets, and other matters affecting development within the City and its study area.

validates many of those discussed by residents. See attached summaries entitled **Demographic Comparison of College Communities in Illinois** and **Readiness for Economic Development**.

1.2 Where is Carbondale's population heading?

Over the past 100+ years, The City of Carbondale's population has multiplied by eight, while Jackson County's population has nearly doubled, as shown in **Table 1.1, Historical Population**. In 1900, the City of Carbondale accounted for 10 percent of the County. Between 1910 and 1950, Carbondale experienced strong population growth due to the emergence of the City as a rail hub for the Illinois Central Railroad. However, the explosive population growth that occurred post World War II launched Carbondale towards its present size and status. Between 1950 and 1970, SIU student enrollment flourished, as did sources of employment in the area. The decades of aggressive growth on the part of the University represented an unusually high rate of population increase. The implications of this rapid rise in population growth are still seen today in the City's land use and transportation patterns of the community.

Table 1.1
Historical Population

Year	Carbondale	Percent Change	City Share of County Population	Jackson County	Percent Change
1900	3,318	__	9.8%	33,871	__
1910	5,411	63.1%	15.8%	34,173	0.9%
1920	6,267	15.8%	16.9%	37,091	8.5%
1930	7,528	20.1%	21.1%	35,650	-3.9%
1940	8,550	13.6%	22.5%	37,920	6.4%
1950	10,021	17.2%	26.3%	38,124	0.5%
1960	14,670	46.4%	34.8%	42,151	10.6%
1970	22,816	55.5%	41.5%	55,008	30.5%
1980	26,414	15.8%	42.8%	61,649	12.1%
1990	27,033	2.3%	44.3%	61,067	-0.9%
2000	25,597	-5.3%	42.9%	59,612	-2.4%
2007	26,367	3.0%	45.2%	58,233	-2.3%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, AND ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (DCEO)

Figure 1.1 | **PAST AND PROJECTED POPULATIONS**

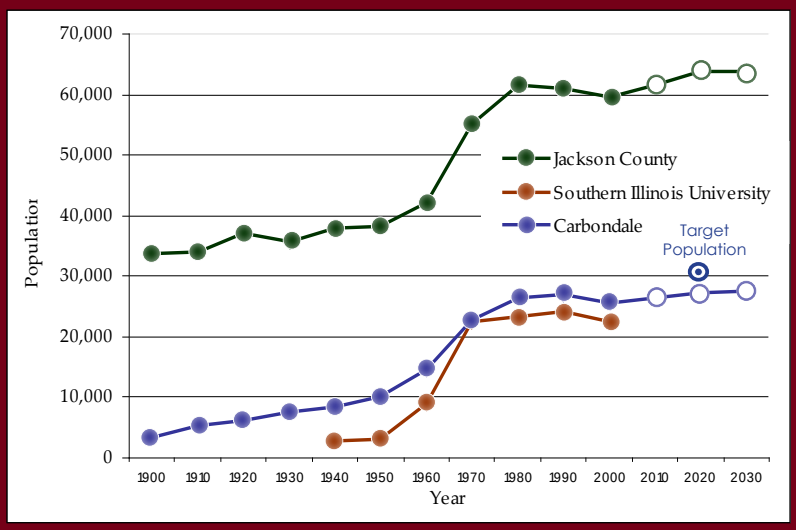
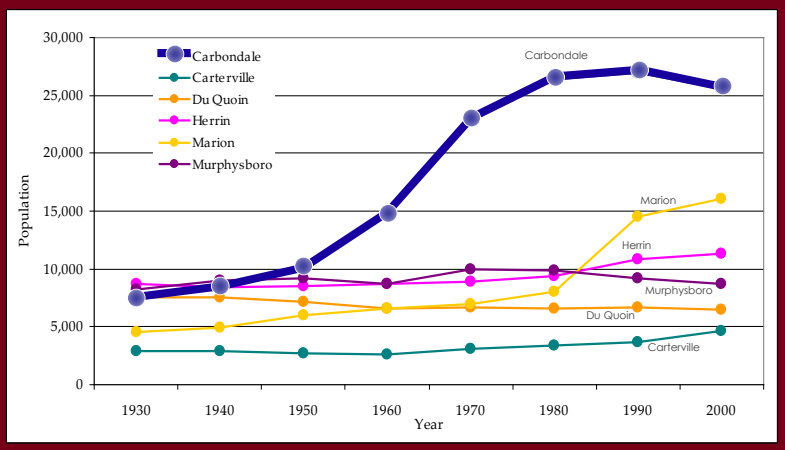


Figure 1.2 | **POPULATION OF COMPARISON CITIES**



Carbondale's population has fluctuated in the past, with more moderate growth in recent decades. **Figure 1.1, Past and Projected Populations**, shows the previous and projected future growth of Carbondale compared to the SIU enrollment and Jackson County population. Carbondale's primary years of population growth occurred between 1950 and 1970 (12,795 people). Not surprisingly, this population growth pattern closely reflects the SIU enrollment trends. As student enrollment has leveled off in recent years, there is reduced growth associated with the University presence. While there is not necessarily a direct relationship between total enrollment and total population, it is worth noting the trend as part of a long-term perspective of the community. Looking ahead, it could be expected that another dramatic rise (or fall) in student enrollment would have a similar impact on the City's population. At present, the overall SIU student enrollment is expected to remain steady in the near term.

Since 1970, the City has experienced small increases in population, with the exception occurring between 1990 and 2000, when the City experienced a 5.3 percent decrease in population. However, recent estimates show these numbers rebounding. Similarly, Jackson County was estimated to have 58,233 residents in 2007, representing a 2.3 percent decrease since 2000. The City's population has leveled off since 1990 and remains around 26,367 persons[1]. At present, just under half of the Jackson County population lives in Carbondale. This share of County population appears to be stable, remaining at about 43 percent over the past 40 years. Population projections, using a step-down methodology, indicate that Carbondale

1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 estimate

Demographic Comparison

of College Communities in Illinois

Carbondale is a freestanding "college community" that struggles to compete with its urban counterparts. Embedded within these education-based economies are both challenges and opportunities, unique to the college-age demographic. This comparative analysis of Illinois college communities is based on local, state and federal data sources, including population characteristics, family and household income, housing characteristics, educational attainment, employment and work force data, and other economic indicators. The following communities are included in the study:

Southern Illinois University
Carbondale (Main Campus)

Illinois State University
Bloomington
Normal

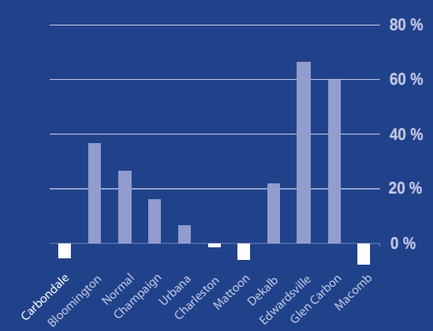
University of Illinois
Champaign
Urbana

Eastern Illinois University
Charleston
Mattoon

Northern Illinois University
Dekalb

Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville (Satellite Campus)
Glen Carbon

Western Illinois University
Macomb



Population Change

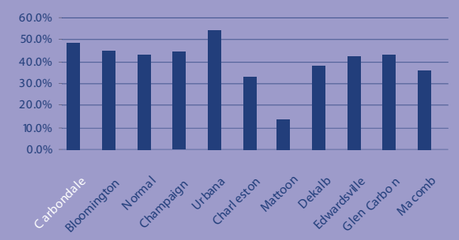
Between 1990 and 2000

Carbondale is home to 25,597 residents according to 2000 census data, a 5.31% decline from the 1990 population of 27,033 residents. Jackson County reflects this loss, with a 5.10% population decline from 61,067 in 1990 to 57,954 in 2005. While Macomb and Mattoon experienced a similar trend, the overwhelming majority of college communities grew between 1990 and 2000, with population gains as great as 66.47% in Edwardsville and 59.73% in its neighboring community, Glen Carbon. Bloomington and Normal also realized increases with 53.87% and 26.63% growth rates, respectively, while DeKalb's population increased by 21.86%. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau

Education

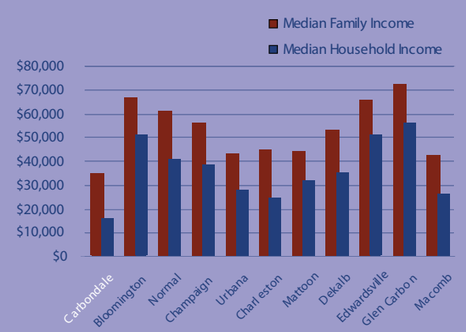
% Population with a Bachelor Degree or Higher

Carbondale is a highly educated community with the second highest rate of residents (48%) with a bachelor's degree or greater and 90.7% of the population with a high school diploma. This community-wide trend is an asset that should translate into greater economic development opportunities. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau



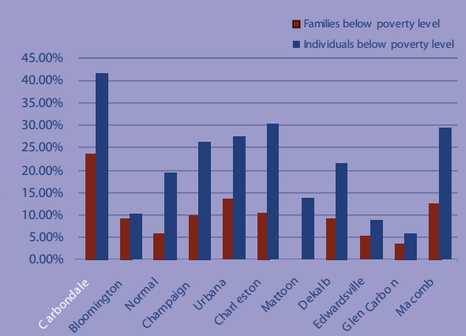
Household and Family Income

Carbondale has the lowest median household income ($15,882) and median family income ($34,450). More urbanized communities, such as Bloomington, Normal, Champaign, Urbana, Edwardsville, and Glen Carbon, experience higher income levels, a reflection of more diverse economies that offer stronger job markets and higher wages. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau



Poverty Level

Carbondale has a higher level of individuals and families below the povery level (41.4% and 23.5%, respectively). This percentage is reinforced by the City's low per capita income ($13,346), an amount below the average and comparable to Charleston and Macomb, two similarly sized, rural communities. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau



Age of Housing Stock

% Constructed Before 1969

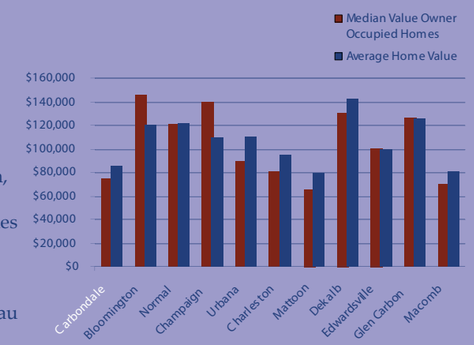
Carbondale has the largest percentage (77%) of housing stock constructed prior to 1969, with most housing over 40 years old. While the age of housing does not directly correlate to a decline in livability or overall neighborhood condition, it underscores the importance of housing rehabilitation and new construction to meet future growth demands. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau

Owner-Occupied Housing

While college communities traditionally contain more rental-occupied housing units than a typical urban or rural city, Carbondale has the lowest rate (28.7%) of owner-occupied housing relative to its counterparts. This number increases to 43.1% when looking at a 10-mile radius from Carbondale. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau

Housing Values

The median housing value ($73,400) and the average housing value ($84,557) for Carbondale are comparable to rural communities (Charleston, Mattoon, and Macomb), but lower than more urbanized ones (Bloomington, Normal, Champaign, Urbana, and DeKalb). Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau

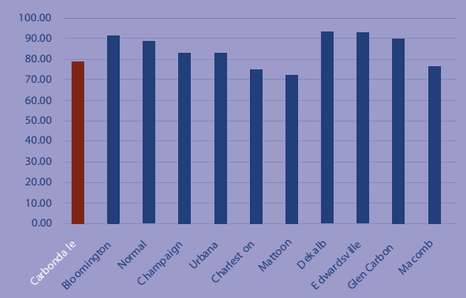


Readiness for

Economic Development

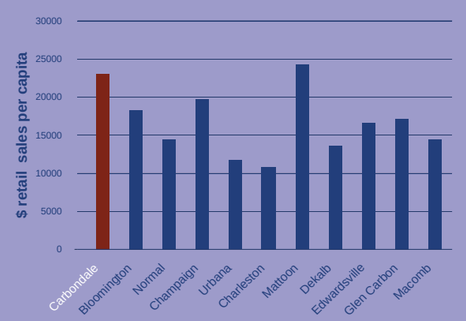
Cost of Living Index

Carbondale's cost of living ranks favorably among other college communities. The City received an index value of 78.53 based on the U.S. average of 100. A value below 100 means the community is cheaper than the US average; a value above 100 means a community is more expensive. Source: City of Carbondale, Sperlings Best Places



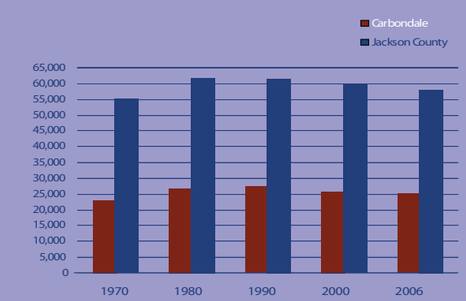
Retail Sales
Per Capita

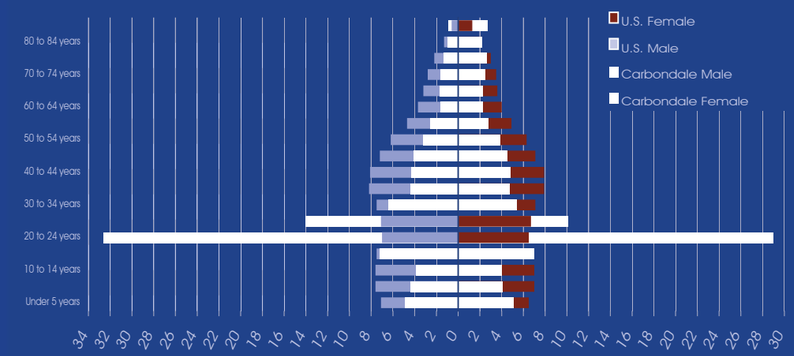
Carbondale has the second highest retail sales per capita - an indicator of positive business performance. In 2007, retail sales amounted to $23,035 per capita. In many instances, the local portion of the retail sales tax accounts for over 50% of the general operating revenue of a community. Source: City of Carbondale, Illinois Department of Revenue

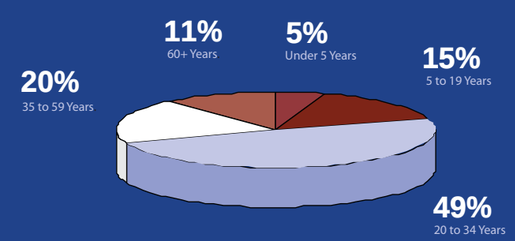


Population Change
City vs. County Comparison

Carbondale's population decreased 5.31% from the 1990 census, dropping from 27,033 residents in 1990 to 25,597 in 2000. In comparison, the population of Jackson County decreased by 5.10% from 61,067 in 1990 to 57,954 in 2005. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau





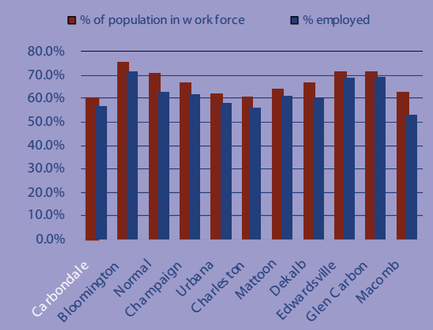


Population Age Breakout

Like most college communities, Carbondale is heavy skewed toward a younger demographic, with a predominance of 20- to 24-year-olds. While there is not necessarily a causal relationship between total enrollment and total population, the population has emulated university enrollment over the long haul. Looking ahead, it could be expected that a dramatic rise (or fall) in student enrollment will have an impact on the population numbers for the City, given the disproportionately high percentage of college-age students. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau

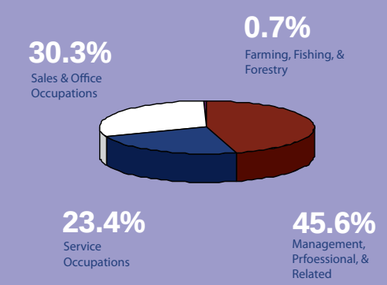
Labor Force
% Total in Labor Force

The City's unemployment rate (4%) is below the state average (5.5%) despite Carbondale's smaller overall workforce (60%) relative to other college communities. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois Department of Employment Security



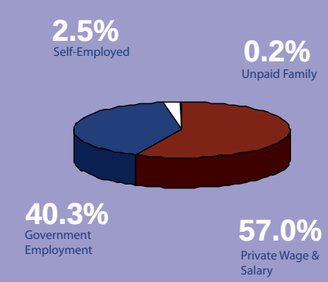
Occupations

46% of Carbondale's population in the labor force is categorized as management, professional, and related fields. 30% are in sales and office occupations, while 23% are in the service sector. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois Department of Employment Security



Class of Worker

57% of Carbondale's population in the labor force are considered private wage and salary workers, while 40% are government workers. Source: City of Carbondale, U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois Department of Employment Security



will remain steady and witness a moderate increase during the 20-year horizon of this Plan. The projections listed in **Table 1.2, Population Projections (Five Years)** are based upon the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO) five-year population projections for Jackson County.

Table 1.2
Population Projections (5 Years)

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Jackson County	59,710	60,704	61,574	62,561	63,719	64,295	63,825
City of Carbondale	25,597	26,103	26,477	26,901	27,399	27,647	27,445

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY; HTTP://WWW.COMMERCE.STATE.IL.US/DCEO/BUREAUS/FACTS_FIGURES/POPULATION_PROJECTION

Such projection methodology assumes that the City's share of County population will continue to remain relatively stable.

Future projections, according to DCEO, show that Jackson County (and by this step-down methodology, Carbondale) is expected to increase in population even though the County's population has declined over the last 10 years. Between 2000 and 2030, Carbondale is expected to increase by 7.2 percent (1,848 residents) to 27,445 persons. However, the target population is set for 30,000 residents (as explained in the **insert on page 1.6**). This goal is achievable through a multi-pronged effort including annexation, proactive economic development strategies, and housing investment. While there are indications of a continued modest population growth, based upon the use of statistical projections of past trends, there are many local initiatives that aim to increase the overall population.

Emerging Themes Related to Future Population Growth

Job Growth Drives Population Increases

A key element to facilitate community growth is providing a variety of employment opportunities. The level of education is also a key determinant related to the capabilities of the area labor force. This influences the types of businesses that may be retained and attracted to the community, as well as the success businesses have in finding the types of labor skills they require. Carbondale compares favorably with other college towns, as well as Jackson County and the State of Illinois. The presence of SIU substantially boosts the educational achievement level in Carbondale, as reflected by 48 percent of its residents having a bachelor's degree or higher.

As stated by multiple stakeholders during the public involvement process, it is important for Carbondale to provide proper opportunities for young adults so they will want to stay in the City. As host to SIU, Carbondale has a constant stream of younger workers who may become future residents and employees. However, a majority of these students migrate to other cities immediately upon graduation. Most important will be an effort to diversify the economy so there is a variety

TARGET POPULATION

In the life of a city – and the City of Carbondale in particular – we also look forward, and we do so everyday with the task of making Carbondale a better community. One of my goals for the community has been to set our sights on increasing our official population to more than 30,000 within the next dozen years. This may not seem like too high of a goal to the average person (adding about 4,000 new residents), but it equates to a net gain of about 300 new people annually. In order to reach this goal, we have to continue to work hard together to attract and retain business, to build new homes, and to create opportunities for people who will want to live in the city.

In the past we have done these things, too, but we never had a recognizable goal to which we would be accountable. Now, with the 30,000 population mark, we have a goal to meet and the work takes on new meaning. Setting achievable goals is important when focusing on the future, because it sets a target and gives us something to measure against in all that we do. Building a community is like building anything else, there have to be points where success can be seen and where one step leads to another. – Mayor Brad Cole

SOURCE: CARBONDALE COMMUNIQUE (JAN/FEB 2007)

of jobs available in the community for new graduates. This effort will be part of a larger goal of bringing more jobs to Carbondale and the region. In order to attract younger residents to remain in Carbondale, other niche amenities will need to be offered and advertised. These opportunities include housing choices that appeal to younger persons and are affordable based upon the local employment options. This constituency composes the future workforce and population of Carbondale, so efforts should continue to be made to attract this segment of society.

Also, it is essential to focus on the existing core constituency, the aging 65+ age cohort, so they have the proper economic, social, recreational, and housing opportunities. The "graying" of the population is a consideration for the community since the needs of residents will be changing: more transportation options for seniors who do not drive, housing alternatives that allow residents to age gracefully in their existing neighborhoods, local health care facilities, and life-long learning opportunities.

Adequate Housing Needed for Growth

Traditionally, Carbondale has experienced a housing shortage of quality rental and ownership options. This fact is evident when comparing housing statistics, as well as visible when inventorying neighborhood conditions. In all cases, there is historical precedent from the past boom of SIU, which rapidly increased the demand for rental housing in the community. In order to house as many students as possible, mobile homes were placed in backyards, garages and attics were converted to living space, and multi-family housing options sprung up around the campus. While the backyard mobile homes are mostly gone today, the legacy of the housing need still continues. New residents (including students) face challenges in finding housing options that include modern conveniences and are priced affordably. As businesses attempt to recruit talented workers to Carbondale, many prospective employees choose to live in Jackson or Williamson County. Anecdotal evidence cites the "lack of quality housing at a reasonable price" as one of the determining

factors for residents who choose to live elsewhere. The limited ability of residents to find an appropriate home in the City has growth implications as the County population may increase while relying on Carbondale jobs. It also curtails existing residents from moving up from their existing home into a larger home or another housing type. Across all housing types, the message from residents is that there is not sufficient choice in housing currently available on the market. Creating more availability and a wider variety of housing is essential for Carbondale to maintain its population growth and economic competitiveness.

A lower rate of home ownership is often an indicator of building maintenance and neighborhood integrity issues. As of 2000, 28.7 percent of dwelling units in Carbondale were owner occupied, with the remaining 71.3 percent renter occupied. Although this is the city-wide average, there are neighborhoods that have much higher and lower rental rates. An abundance of renters in one area can lead to neighborhood-wide issues that may not be present in other areas. A lack of neighborhood integrity and obvious investment can permit a cycle that drives away potential investors or new residents. While less of a driver in regards to population growth, neighborhood character is an important factor when weighing options about housing. Just as neighborhoods suffering from disinvestment may deter potential residents, vibrant locations may attract additional residents to Carbondale.

Role of the Natural Environment in Guiding Growth

The City of Carbondale is a nationally recognized small city that is loved by outdoor enthusiasts. Carbondale has been highlighted as such in a recent publication, *101 Best Outdoor Towns in America: Unspoiled Places to Visit, Live & Play* (2007). As a gateway to the Shawnee National Forest, the City is located near the largest forested land area in Illinois, and subsequently benefits from the recreational and natural resource opportunities it has to offer. These resources include the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge and Giant City State Park which are located adjacent to the City. The City has a history of implementing and encouraging environmental stewardship through various programs and policies. This also coincides with the work of various departments at SIU that contribute scientific research, volunteer programs, and educational opportunities about the local natural environment.

In geographic terms, this Comprehensive Plan addresses the current city limits of Carbondale, as well as its surrounding "extra-territorial jurisdiction." In accordance with Illinois State Statute, Carbondale's planning area is allowed to extend one and one-half miles beyond the City limits, as shown in **Map 1.1, Study Area**. This area is subject to the City's zoning and subdivision regulations, which guide land use, layout, and intensity of future development. The City's zoning and subdivision jurisdiction is an important consideration in this Plan since many of the City's natural resources are located in the land surrounding the City. Thus, protection of these lands from incompatible development practices can be implemented through the City's regulatory authority.

1.3 Planning Context

What is the Purpose of this Comprehensive Plan?

This Comprehensive Plan is an important policy reference for the City since it:

- Lays out the City's "big picture" vision and associated goals regarding the future growth and enhancement of the community;
- considers, at once, the entire geographic area of Carbondale, including potential growth areas where new development and/or annexation may occur beyond the already developed portions of the City; and
- assesses near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key building blocks of Carbondale (*e.g., land use, transportation, urban design, economic development, redevelopment, neighborhoods, parks and recreation, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, etc.*).

Through this Comprehensive Plan, the City may determine how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth, as well as the redevelopment of older neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. This Plan is aimed at ensuring that ongoing development and redevelopment will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services can keep pace and residents' quality of life will be enhanced. Significantly, by clarifying and stating the City's intentions regarding the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, this Plan may also create a level of certainty for residents, landowners, developers, and potential investors.

"PLANNING" IS....

…the process of identifying issues and needs, establishing goals and objectives, and determining the most effective means by which these ends may be achieved.

How to Use This Plan

This Plan, as embraced by the community and its leadership, is envisioned to help take the City to a new level in terms of its livability and tangible accomplishments. However, this Plan is only words and images on paper if its recommendations are not pursued and effectively implemented.

The Plan is ultimately a guidance document for City officials and staff who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health, and look and feel of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City's annual budget process, including routine, but essential, functions such as code enforcement;
- major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the City's Community Investment Program and related bond initiatives;
- new and amended City ordinances and regulations closely linked to Comprehensive Plan objectives (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of land development, subdivisions, and zoning matters);
- departmental work plans and staffing in key areas;
- support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs and

strategies, including the City Council's own strategic planning;

- pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local funds and/or expedite certain projects; and
- initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes that neither could accomplish alone.

Despite these many avenues for action, this Plan should not be considered a cure all for every issue in the community. Instead, this Plan focuses on the responsibilities of the City in the physical planning arena, where it may have a more direct and extensive role than in areas such as education, social services, and arts and culture. Of necessity, this Plan, as a vision and policy reference, must remain relatively general. The Plan may not touch on every challenge before the community, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in the coming years.

LOCAL PLANNING

The success of the Plan depends upon how it is integrated with the operation of local government (planning, policy development, regulation, and programming through City departments).

PLANNING AUTHORITY

The State of Illinois allows a Planning Commission or Planning Department to create a Comprehensive Plan as an advisory document to the City Council. It is to be used when creating municipal regulations by stating policies or establishing a rational basis for decision-making. In the event that a zoning decision is appealed, the content of the Comprehensive Plan would be evaluated to verify that the ordinance or planning decision is supported in the Plan text and maps.

The Illinois Municipal Code allows the commission or department:

> "To prepare and recommend to the corporate authorities a comprehensive plan for the present and future development or redevelopment of the municipality. Such plan may be adopted in whole or in separate geographical or functional parts, each of which, when adopted, shall be the official comprehensive plan, or part thereof, of that municipality. This plan may include reasonable requirements with reference to streets, alleys, public grounds, and other improvements hereinafter specified. The plan, as recommended by the plan commission and as thereafter adopted in any municipality in this state, may be made applicable, by the terms thereof, to land situated within the corporate limits and contiguous territory not more than one and one-half miles beyond the corporate limits and not included in any municipality. Such plan may be implemented by ordinances
>
> a establishing reasonable standards of design for subdivisions and for resubdivisions of unimproved land and of areas subject to redevelopment in respect to public improvements as herein defined;
>
> b establishing reasonable requirements governing the location, width, course, and surfacing of public streets and highways, alleys, ways for public service facilities, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lights, parks, playgrounds, school grounds, size of lots to be used for residential purposes, stormwater drainage, water supply and distribution, sanitary sewers, and sewage collection and treatment; and
>
> c may designate land suitable for annexation to the municipality and the recommended zoning classification for such land upon annexation."

SOURCE: 65 ILCS 5/11-12-5

It is also important to distinguish between the function of the Comprehensive Plan relative to the City's development regulations, such as the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. The Plan recommends overall policy for future land use, roads, utilities, and other aspects of community growth and enhancement. The City's zoning ordinance and official zoning district map then implement policy in terms of specific land use, building, and site development standards. The City's subdivision regulations establish standards in conformance with the Plan for the physical subdivision of land, the layout of new streets and building sites, and the design and construction of roads, water and sewer lines, and storm drainage.

Citizen Involvement – Early and Often

Local planning is often the most direct and efficient way to involve members of the general public in determining the vision of their community. The process of plan preparation provides a rare opportunity for two-way communication between citizens and local government officials as to their vision of the community and the details of how that vision is to be achieved. The Plan results in a series of guiding principles that will assist the City in administering development regulations; determining the location, financing, and sequencing of public improvements; and steering reinvestment and redevelopment efforts. The Plan also provides a means of coordinating the actions of the different departments and divisions within the City, with those of outside agency's.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Through the course of stakeholder interviews, there were many comments that summarized the broader planning issues. Some of these issue area comments included:

How should the future land use, recreation, and environmental needs be met?

- "Future expansion of the City needs to be concentrated and close to existing development as an environmental benefit. Keep leapfrog development to a minimum."
- "Carbondale needs to create a character of its own versus having strip malls like every other town."
- "We need a Downtown with more businesses and activities. There need to be more options for dining, shopping, and entertainment."
- "Carbondale has the opportunity to be natural and urban together. However, there are few instances of recent development that do a good job of blending the two strategies together. "
- "The idea of infill is to preserve old structures rather than to tear them down and replace them with new buildings. We need to capitalize on our history and the significance of buildings."
- "There are more incentives necessary for Downtown rather than standards and regulations only."
- "The community needs more green space, trails, and better sidewalks."

What improvements are necessary for better mobility?

- "The Amtrak service is highly valued by students as a way to get in/out of town. Connections to Amtrak via the Saluki Express."

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

To facilitate the process of updating this Comprehensive Plan, the City engaged Kendig Keast Collaborative, urban planning consultants, and appointed a 15-member, broadly-representative Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (PRC) to work with City officials, staff, residents, and the consultants. Over the course of a 14-month period, a variety of public outreach and involvement activities were conducted, background studies were completed, and individual elements of the Plan were drafted, reviewed, and refined to produce a document for public and official consideration.

[CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE]

- "There need to be 'free-moving' pedestrian corridors between the University and Downtown, and between Downtown and the hospital. Shopping and restaurants could be more accessible to students through a stronger connection."
- "Stronger connections are needed between Downtown and nearby neighborhoods. Many residents bike and walk, or would like to do more so, but obstacles exist that prohibit safe mobility. Linkages are important to the viability of both the neighborhoods and Downtown."

How to address existing and future housing and neighborhoods?

- "The recent housing market has improved with the recent addition of new units. There are now more options, which have helped the housing situation. However, there is a concern as to the future of the older housing stock owned by individual owners. What happens to them now that there is a greater supply in the market?"
- "A general aim is to develop housing closer to amenities. Many workers commute to Carbondale from other places." When asked why, 'housing issues' are a primary concern.

How to maintain and improve the Carbondale atmosphere for business and job growth?

- "Carbondale is not a boomtown that rapidly rises and falls, but is representative of more steady growth. At the same time, there are strong connections to the University's student population, which acts as a base for the community. The University's influence (losing and gaining students) affects the community in many ways."
- "The 'brain drain' issue is real and there is a need to introduce students to the opportunities available in the region before they leave for other areas."
- "We must continue to think regionally and act locally. There is much strength in the larger region, within 50 miles. We must continue to work together through the Southern Illinois Leadership Group and others."
- "Our natural environment is a major attraction to this area. This must be preserved and protected if it is to remain an asset."
- "Economic development opportunities were viewed to be in the medical field as well as retirees (aging as an asset). However, senior services and mobility concerns loom as potential issues."
- "Economic development potential exists both on the airport property as well as adjacent sites."

GETTING TO ACTION

The Plan must go beyond general and lofty sounding goals. While everybody may agree with such goals, true progress will only occur if the plan establishes a policy framework and provides guidance as to how particular opportunities and challenges are to be tackled.

The ability to implement the Plan is directly correlated to the amount of citizen participation and the sense of ownership derived from the process. The Plan contains many components and serves numerous functions, such as providing information, identifying existing conditions and characteristics, and establishing policies and strategies. As graphically illustrated in **Figure 1.3, Public Involvement in the Planning Process**, the public involvement activities included:

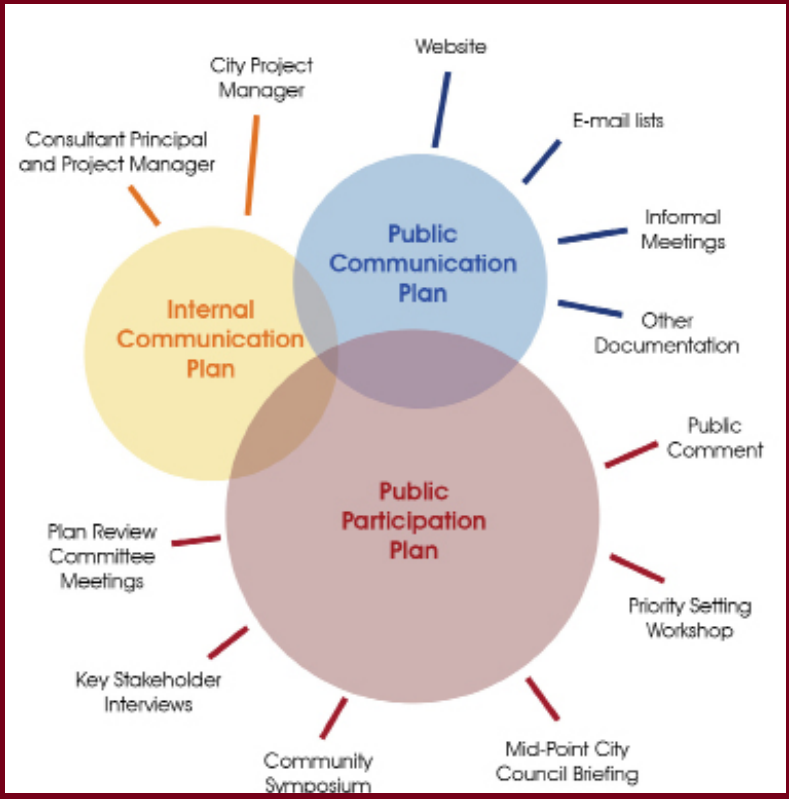
Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (PRC) Meetings. A Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (PRC) composed of elected and appointed officials and a representative group of citizens, business and property owners, and City staff provided strategic direction for the project through Consultant and PRC scheduled meetings. Comprehensive Plan Review Committee meetings were open to the public and posted on the web site and at locations where project materials were available.

Stakeholder Interviews. Input from residents, landowners, business owners, and City officials occurred through key stakeholder interviews on subject-specific topics throughout the planning process.

Community Symposium. A community symposium was held on March 26, 2009 to discuss the Comprehensive Plan with residents and to kick-off the planning process. This input helped to ensure that comments and resident's experiences are included in the Plan. It added many voices to the Plan so that the input was broadly representative of the entire community.

City Council Involvement. A mid-point City Council briefing was held on July 21, 2009 to update the Council on the activities to date. As not only the approval body, but also the chief implementing agent, the City Council was involved at periodic points in the process.

Figure 1.3 | **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**



A priority-setting workshop where members of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, City Council, and Planning Commission were invited, was held in November 2009 to engage in a group discussion about the on-going process and to gather feedback. Analysis of the draft document allowed for establishing near-term and long-term priorities for plan implementation The results of this workshop are incorporated into the Implementation Chapter.

> "The Citizens Advisory Committee recommends that, in the coming years, Carbondale develop as a regional center for business, education, health care, and culture. The talented pool of citizens, businesses, and institutions in Carbondale should make such a reality possible."
>
> – Carbondale 2000

Throughout the process, citizens were able to review the latest updates on the City's website and provide feedback to City staff. Residents were also able to participate in the Community Symposium, complete a community survey, and voice support and/or opposition at the public hearing. The Plan is a definitive source of information regarding the existing and future conditions and characteristics of the community. By its nature, it is intended to serve all interests of the community.

Building upon Past Planning Efforts

Carbondale 2000: Visions for City Development in the 21st Century (1993) is a strategic planning document that summarizes the goals that Carbondale has identified through the involvement and participation of residents in a Citizens Advisory Committee(CAC). Although that effort preceded this planning effort, and the previous Comprehensive Plan (1997), the positive impacts of the citizen involvement can still be felt in the community. As stated in the Introduction,

> "The Carbondale 2000 project addressed six major aspects of life within the community: city government services, economic development, education, health care, transportation, and housing. Each topic was investigated through discussions with informed professionals and CAC group discussions. The views and ideas expressed in those forums were drawn together into formal recommendations presented below. The six topics are broad subjects and have some overlap among them. In various ways, each topic has an impact on others. The Citizens Advisory Committee presents the following recommendations for Carbondale 2000 in sincere hope that they can help Carbondale develop its immense potential as "the best small city in Illinois."

In comparison to the Carbondale 2000 process, the 1997 Comprehensive Plan included a more substantial amount of public involvement, utilizing citizen input to help define the City's planning objectives, strategies, and priorities and the means by which they are achieved.

As a result of public involvement, the following goals and objectives were identified in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan:

Growth Management

- To control the type and location of development beyond the City's limits.
- To support and build on the residential character of the community while promoting Carbondale as a regional center.

- To coordinate planning with local, county, regional and state officials to control development beyond the City's jurisdiction.

Housing

- To protect and maintain single family neighborhoods as low density residential areas.
- To encourage the development of all types and prices of housing in Carbondale.
- To promote opportunities for residential rehabilitation and redevelopment in residential areas to provide housing for low and moderate income families.

Transportation

- To promote efficient circulation and accessibility within and beyond the City of Carbondale.
- To pursue alternative transportation modes, including bicycles, public transportation, and paratransit to reduce traffic volumes.
- To enhance the appearance of major streets and gateways into the community.

Downtown

- To emphasize public and private improvements that help establish Downtown as a focal point for all Carbondale's citizens.
- To maintain the character of the Downtown while continuing to serve a variety of local markets.

Economic Development

- To continue the growth of regional and local oriented uses that provides a broad base of employment opportunities.
- To continue to build on the partnership with Southern Illinois University by expanding cooperative City-University efforts.

Natural Features/Open Space

- To protect natural features and open space as the City continues to develop and expand.
- To create more open space throughout the community.
- To protect air and water quality and land, ground, and water resources from future development which could diminish, degrade, and have adverse impacts on these natural resources.

Community Services

- To promote on-going communication and coordination with other governmental bodies, public agencies, and other service providers so as to support the needs of Carbondale's residents.
- To maintain the level of quality services in the City as it grows.
- To provide infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Infill Development

- To promote a compact, contiguous urban development pattern.
- To support compatible development on vacant, redeveloped, or under utilized parcels throughout the community.

A Vision for Carbondale

To establish a vision for the community and to help direct the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan, the PRC established the following vision statement:

By the year 2030 Carbondale will **broaden** and **diversify** its economic base and continue to be the **regional hub** for business, commerce, and cultural activities. Carbondale will be the leader in specialized **medical** facilities and rehabilitative services. Carbondale will be recognized as the home of a major research university. Its identity as a **"university town"** will guide its growth and development over the next decades.

The community will capitalize on its location as the gateway to Shawnee National Forest to become a destination spot for eco-tourism and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The rural, less congested location provides a relaxed atmosphere that will serve as a backdrop to attract retirees desiring to relocate. Residents will take advantage of the **natural surroundings** and beauty of the region and the wide range of cultural and intellectual offerings through the University and community.

Carbondale will be home to one of the most **vibrant downtowns** in the region with many cultural activities, art studios and entertainment venues. In addition, the downtown will provide a variety of retail services, professional uses, and restaurants that attract residents at all times throughout the day. The availability and large variety of desirable student housing options, coupled with the University's many educational, research, and sports opportunities, will attract an increasing number of students.

Carbondale will be a **"model community"** recognized nationally for its programs, policies and initiatives in **sustainable** growth and development. **Families** will be attracted by the City's overall **quality of life**, affordable and diversified housing, and commitment to diversified citizenry. Strong neighborhoods with active neighborhood associations will provide an ideal setting for all residents. The excellent public education system will become a model for creating high achievement and high morale.

An Overview of the Comprehensive Plan Topics

Chapter 1, Introduction & Vision

This chapter explains the purpose of community planning and the value that will be accrued from undertaking a comprehensive planning process in Carbondale and its 1.5-mile planning area. The chapter focuses on compiling and summarizing meaningful information on key community indicators (such as the Economic Profile Report of 'College Communities' in Illinois, which is featured earlier in this chapter as full page layouts). Along with utilizing Carbondale 2000 – Visions for City Development in the 21st Century, the chapter also documents the public participation activities that served as the foundation of the planning process, leading to a consensus Vision Statement from which the Plan's guiding principles and policies flow.

Chapter 2, Land Use Character & Community Growth

This chapter provides policy for directing future development and managing growth, preserving valued areas and lands, and protecting the integrity of neighborhoods. Proper policy guidance is established to aid the City in making decisions about the compatibility and suitability of individual developments within the context of the larger community.

Existing facilities, services, and utilities are evaluated to determine areas requiring improvement to support the intended future growth. The focal point is how growth and new development is coordinated with public amenities and services.

Chapter 3, Community Mobility

The purpose of this chapter is to ensure orderly development of the transportation system, considering all forms of mobility. In coordination with the Land Use Character and Community Growth chapter, this chapter evaluates the impacts of different transportation investment decisions on future development, redevelopment, and community character. The multi-modal transportation plan is an essential element to ensure preservation of rights-of-way and other coordination needs and opportunities concurrent with new development.

Chapter 4, Housing and Neighborhoods

This chapter evaluates the design of neighborhoods within the framework of the City's current development regulations and the resulting impact on housing development, community character, urban form, and community connectivity. A key issue is the adequate supply of housing with a desired level of quality and affordability. This chapter ties with the City's subdivision regulations and other development standards to ensure that development will occur in a manner that meets the expectations of the City, is compatible with adjacent development, and is feasible and profitable.

Chapter 5, Economic Development

This chapter tackles one of the key elements in Carbondale (as well as the larger region), which is strengthening and diversifying the economy. This strategy includes reviewing current conditions and initiating action steps for growing

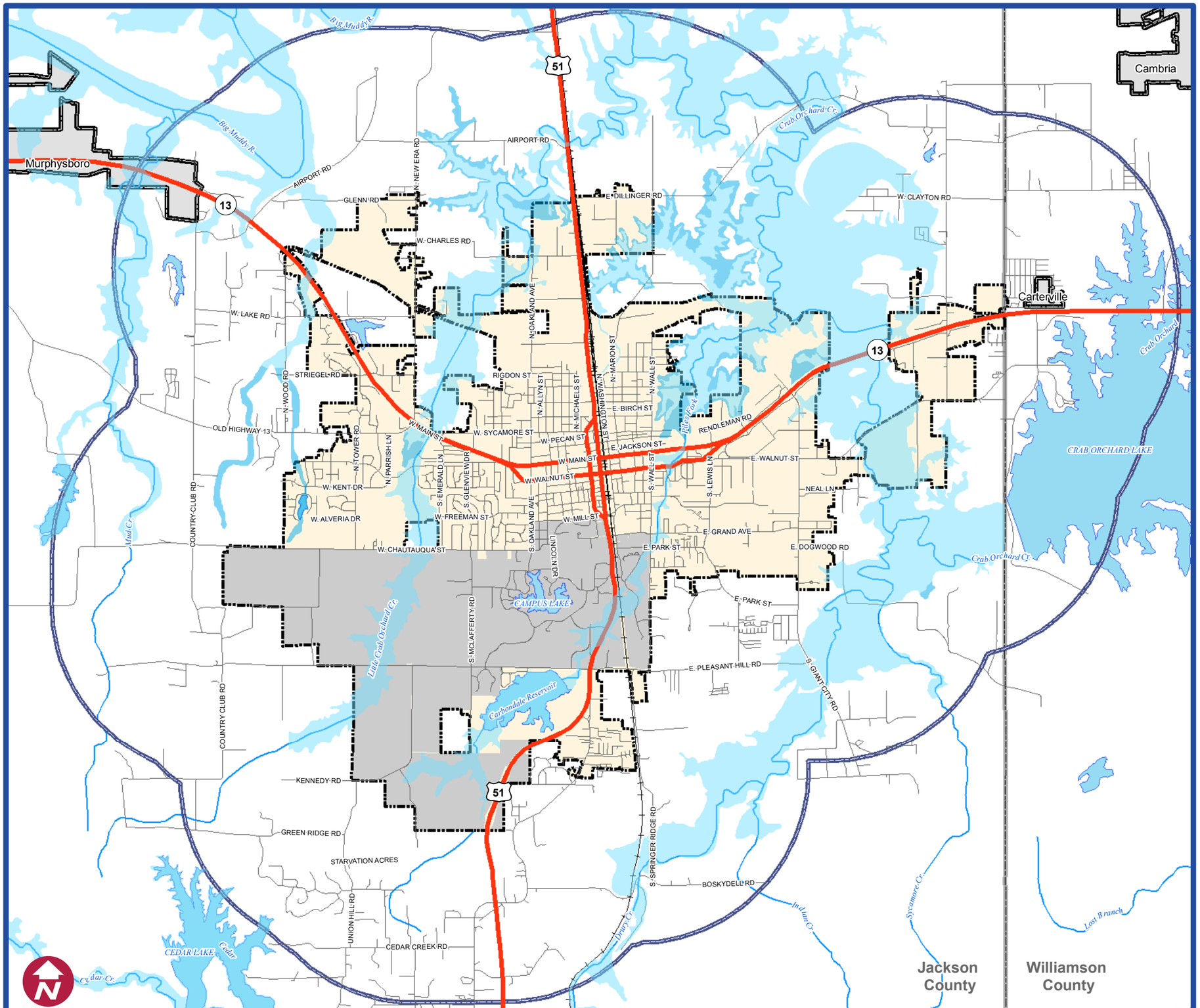
the community in a way that is both feasible and compatible with Carbondale's character. These policies outline ways to support and retain existing businesses, attract and grow new job-creating businesses, and train the community's workforce for current and future labor needs—all with a view toward achieving an improved living environment.

Of particular importance to economic development are the physical planning components that contribute to Carbondale's readiness to accommodate new development and reinvestment. Key considerations include the provision of sufficient space in appropriate locations for commercial business parks and industrial development; connections to the airport and SIU campus; adequate public facilities and services; available, quality housing; and a high-quality living environment for all residents of the community.

Chapter 6, Implementation

This final chapter utilizes the recommendations of the individual plan elements to consolidate an overall strategy for implementing the Comprehensive Plan, particularly for the highest priority initiatives that are first on the community's action agenda. Specific tasks are cited which must be accomplished to achieve the community's vision and goals.

1.1 Study Area



Study Area

100-year Floodplain
500-year Floodplain
Railroad
City Limits
Lakes
Southern Illinois University
Streams
County Boundary
Study Area (1.5 mile)
Places

Miles
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2

Carbondale ILLINOIS
KENDIG KEAST COLLABORATIVE

City of Carbondale

May 2010